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SPEECH

OF

HON. WM. J. ALSTON, OF ALABAMA,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 18, 1850.

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In Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, on the President's Message transmitting the Constitution of California.

Mr. ALSTON spoke as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: An imperious sense of duty constrains me to occupy the time of this House—a duty I owe to the constituents whom I have the honor to represent, and to the Union. Born and reared at the South, my destiny is indissolubly connected with hers; if she shall prosper, and look forward with buoyancy and hope to the future, I shall rejoice with her; but if, in the providence of God, the dark cloud of fanaticism which now threatens, shall overshadow her, and the fury of that tempest shall sweep her fair fields with the besom of destruction, I, too, sir, must share her calamity.

Great and universal discontent pervades the southern States, and the uprising of the masses, like the ground swell of the ocean, indicates the approaching storm. What, sir, has occasioned this discontent but your continued agitation of the slave question for the last fifteen years? We are told by the gentleman from New York [Mr. SACKETT] that the South acknowledges the sin and evil of this institution, and yet seeks to extend that evil over others; and to sustain this assertion, he refers to the Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CLAY], to the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. McDOWELL,] and others. The South, Mr. Chairman, entertains no such opinions; and it would be just as fair, because certain persons in New York deny the marriage rite and the validity of personal property, to charge that New York was opposed to marriage and private property. We are told by St. Paul, that if there had been no law there would have been no sin: then sin must be the violation of Divine law; and I shall proceed to show that slavery is not a violation of that law, and therefore no sin.

Physiologists and the learned agree, that the different complexions among the higher orders of creation are too deeply seated in nature to be the effect of climate, food, or disease; and some philosophers have advanced the speculative opinion, that the negro does not belong to the race of man spoken of in the Bible, and refer to his complexion, and his skull-bones, which are thicker than those of the white man or Indian, and invariably so; his facial, and other bones; his form, and the peculiar structure of his skin, with other differences which might be mentioned. It is objected to this theory, that the Bible informs us that “of one blood are all the nations of the earth.” It is, however, replied to this, that if the negro belongs to an inferior grade, this passage does not apply to him, and by no means proves his equality with

man, who was created only a little lower than the angels; and the 20th verse of the 23d chapter of Ezekiel is supposed to confirm this idea, where it is said, that the flesh of the Egyptian is as the flesh of the beasts of the field.* And it is further said, that as we advance from mere inactive matter to vegetable and animal life, we find fixed and invariable laws, and a regular gradation or series of steps, rising one above another in regular order, from the smallest living creature to man, the highest; and it is supposed by those reasoners, that the negro may be a connecting link between the Indian and the orang-outang; and it is urged that there is a greater difference between the white man and negro than between the latter and the orang-outang. I shall not, however, pursue this speculative idea further.

But, sir, suppose we are all of one family, (and I believe this to be the almost universal opinion,) these mysterious differences still remain to be accounted for, and can alone be explained upon the supposition of a miracle contravening the established and invariable laws of nature. We are told in the Bible that all the antediluvians were destroyed by the flood, except Noah and his family; that Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and according to the idiom of the Hebrew language, objects and things were named in reference to appearance, or some quality, and frequently both. Taking this as our guide, we find Shem was copper colored, Ham black, and Japheth white or fair—such being the meanings of these words according to our commentators.

We find that one of Ham's sons settled in Canaan, from whom the country took its name; another, Mezar, Mizraim or Menes, settled in Egypt; and if there be any doubt about the latter, it will be removed on reference to the 23d verse of the 105th Psalm, where it is said Egypt is the land of Ham. Herodotus, the historian, who lived some five hundred years before Christ, tells us that the inhabitants of Egypt, with all the contiguous nations in the interior of Africa, were black, with curled or woolly hair, and, in this, he is confirmed by Abulfaragus, an Arabian historian, quoted by Adam Clark, by Richard Watson, in his Historical Dictionary, and others.

Thus, sir, we set out with the supposition that Ham was black, from his name; we trace his descendants to Egypt, and find they were black, resembling our negroes, who are known to have been imported from Africa. In the 9th chapter of

* 1st Corinthians, 39th verse.

Genesis, 25th, 26th, and 27th verses, Noah said, "Cursed be Canaan, (our commentators, Clarke, Newton, &c., say it should be Ham, therein agreeing with the Arabic copy of the Bible,) a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." "And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan [Ham] shall be his servant." "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan [Ham] shall be his servant. The use of the word "cursed" makes it more than a mere prophecy of crimes which should afterwards be committed in the world. It was a judicial and irrevocable decree of Heaven that this race should be enslaved by the other two, and, surely, it cannot be said to be a sin to do that which God himself has ordained and ordered to be done. We find slavery recognized in the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy: the owner was required to make his slave keep it also, and in the tenth commandment it is said, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox," &c.; and these commandments were given to Moses long after the curse pronounced on Ham and his descendants. Can it be supposed for a moment that our Creator would continue this state of vassalage and regulate it by divine law, if, as Abolitionists say, it were a crime of the deepest dye? Could he not as readily perceive the enormity of this thing as they? and could he not have denounced it in as strong terms as they? Why did he not do so? I leave it to their peculiarly-tender consciences to answer.

Moses, by divine direction, enacted what the Israelites should do after getting possession of the land of Canaan. It is said in the 25th chapter of Leviticus, 44th and 45th verses, that "both thy bondmen and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids." "Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy and of their families that are with you which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession." "And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever." Can any language characterize southern slavery in plainer or stronger terms than is here laid down by the inspired penman? It is here said "ye shall buy servants" and they shall be your possession"—the necessary words to convey distinctly the idea of property; and it does not stop there—it proceeds to show how long this property in slaves shall last, and does not confine it to six years nor to the year of jubilee, as in the case of the Israelitish race of servants, nor even to the lives of the parties, but declares it shall descend to their children, and not only to the first generation but forever. These people who were thus ordered to be enslaved were the descendants of Ham. Here, then, is a divine enactment enforcing the curse pronounced by Noah on Ham and his descendants; and many religious people at the South believe the present condition of the descendants of Ham is a palpable and irrefragable proof of the truth of the Bible.

I now proceed to show that, according to the Bible, slavery might originate in the following manner, to wit: 1st, A man might dispose of his own liberty, (Exodus xxi., 5, 6;) 2d, Slaves might be acquired by war and conquest, (Deut. xx., 14;)

3d, Children might be sold by their own parents, (Exodus xxi., 7;) 4th, Thieves unable to make restitution, or pay the penalty, might be sold, (Exodus xxii., 3;) 5th, Might be acquired by purchase generally. (Leviticus xxv., 44, 45;) 6th, A person might be born a slave, (Exodus xxi., 4;) 7th, Might be acquired by gift, as from Abimelech to Abraham, (Genesis xx., 14;) 8th, Might be acquired by marriage, (Genesis xvi., 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; xxiv., 59, 61.) And again, sir, to show that the idea of property entered fully into all these regulations, I refer to the 21st chapter of Exodus, 20th and 21st verses, where it is said: If after the cruel beating of the servant by the owner, he shall die after a day or two, the owner shall not be punished, because "he is his money."* This covers the whole ground of southern slavery, with this difference, that our law holds the slave-owner as responsible for killing a slave as a white man. Indeed, our law is so tender of the life of the slave, because he belongs to a different caste, that it permits none but slaveowners to sit on his trial in capital cases, who might feel a sympathy with him, and better understand the character and motives of his conduct. Again, sir, slavery is recognized by God himself in his covenant with Abraham, in the 17th chapter of Genesis, 12th verse. Thus, sir, the Deity, who created the universe and established moral and religious laws for the government of mankind, and might reasonably be supposed to understand what morality and religion required, authorized the enslaving of the descendants of Ham, (believed to be our negroes.) "Not so," say Abolitionists; "it is a grievous sin;" and in this assertion they arrogate to themselves more wisdom and greater purity than the God who made them; and if he were now on earth, and declared this doctrine, like the Pharisees of old, they would heap upon him black opprobrium, and go about to kill him. Sir, Abraham, the patriarch, had slaves bought with his money—born in his house—by marriage with Sarai—by gift from Abimelech, and probably by inheritance; and when he marched to the rescue of Lot, no less than three hundred and eighteen went with him into battle.

Isaac had slaves by inheritance, and by marriage with Rebecca. Solomon had slaves, with many others. Abimelech, Bathuel, Laban, and Job, had slaves, and all these did not belong to Israel.

Thus, sir, it will be seen, both from the Bible and ancient history, that slavery existed at a very early period after the flood, and seems to have extended over the whole world. But, sir, it may be said that the Gospel was a milder dispensation, and abolished the law. When Christ was about to be baptized, he said he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.† At the time he made his appearance in the world, slavery existed everywhere in its worst form, extending even to life. Did he denounce it as a great moral, social, and political curse? No, sir, he did not; but, then, he

* In the 16th chapter of Genesis we find Abraham said to Sarai, "Behold, thy handmaid is in thy own hand; use her as it pleaseth thee." Grotius says it was a concession of power even to put her to death; and St. John Chrysostom (Hom. 37) describes it as an unlimited power of punishment for petulance and insubordination, which Calmet, in his remarks on this place, says, every master had over his slave, and every husband had over the slave of his wife.

† St. Matthew, v., 17.

may not have understood it so well as Abolitionists now do. I know, sir, it is said that we live in an age of progress; and who shall say that, like the giants of old, these people shall not make war against Heaven? or it may be that he, not being quite so holy, (in their estimation,) has failed in doing his duty to mankind by not thundering anathemas against this, as they say, enormous sin. And, sir, who shall say these wisecracks may not, like those who built the tower of Babel, be trying to find a shorter road to Heaven? But, sir, our Savior, not agreeing exactly with Abolitionists, has laid down in the Gospel rules for the government of slavery. Is to regulate by law how a thing may be done, to abolish it? Does God in the Old Testament, or our Savior in the New, ever lay down rules for the commission of sin? Christ enjoins obedience on the part of slaves to their masters, and to the bad as well as to the good, as a thing well-pleasing in the sight of God.* Abolitionists say no, that is altogether wrong; they ought not to be in servitude to any man, and therefore ought not to obey. Submission to the laws and peace with all mankind, are enjoined in the Gospel; yet Abolitionists, professing to be imbued with its principles, and acting under its guidance, proclaim to the world that they are in favor of revolutionizing this Government to get clear of slavery. Wendell Phillips said, at a public meeting in Boston, in 1818, after predicting an insurrection of slaves in the South, "God forbid I should in any way guaranty protection to the wife and children of the white man." No, sir; he said "he wanted the North to stand still and let the fight go on;" and he was cheered by that meeting. Is it for the sons of men who were engaged in the African slave trade, and who sold these negroes, or a great part of them, to our fathers, and put the price in their pockets, to reproach us with injustice to the slave, while they still retain the profits of that traffic? Has it not entered into the aggregate mass of their wealth? Let them remember, sir, that those who go into courts of equity on earth, or the high court of chancery in Heaven, are required to have clean hands; let them look well to their own sins in regard to slavery, by keeping back this money, with the interest, before they reprove the sins of their brethren. If, as they contend, it is a great sin to steal men from Africa, I would call their attention to the 22d chapter of Exodus, 3d verse, where we are told that the thief was required to make restitution, and if he had nothing, that he was sold for his theft. Now, sir, let them make restitution, or be sold into slavery for this stealing of negroes from Africa; and if this were done, perhaps the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. STEVENS] might find himself subjected to the same ceremony which he says is performed in Virginia.

But, after all, what is your boasted emancipation of the negro at the North? Do you allow him political freedom, without which, in this country, liberty is rather an insult than a blessing?

Mr. Justice Blackstone bases all human law on the law of nature and the law of God, and founds our right to all property on the 28th verse of

the 1st chapter of Genesis, which, he says, was a gift to all mankind equally. Upon the laws of nature and religion, he says, the law of nations is erected; and according to Justinian, the ancient civilians held that slavery might arise, *jure gentium*—1st, from captivity in war, whence slaves were called *mancipia*, *quasi manu capti*—the conqueror, say they, had a right to take the life of a captive, and, having spared that, had a right to deal with him as he pleased; 2d, *jure civili*, as when a man sells himself; 3d, *jure nascentur*—the children of acquired slaves are, *jure natura*, by a negative kind of birthright, slaves also; the civil law agreeing in all three of these particulars with the Bible; and in the British nation, where slavery has long been abolished, in the winter of 1817, Mr. Justice Scott, the brightest ornament of the English bench, in delivering the judgment of the court in the case of the *Le Louis*, a French vessel taken by a British cruiser for being engaged in the slave trade, said—

"That personal slavery arising out of forcible captivity, is coeval with the earliest periods of the history of mankind; that it is found existing (and, as far as appears, without annihilation) in the earliest and most authentic records of the human race; that it is recognized by the codes of the most polished nations of antiquity; that under the light of Christianity itself, the possession of persons so acquired has been in every civilized country invested with the character of property, and secured as such by all the protections of law; that solemn treaties have been framed and national monopolies eagerly sought, to facilitate and extend the commerce in this sacred property; and all this, with all the sanctions of law, public and municipal, and without any opposition, except the protests of a few private moralists, little heard, and less attended to, in every country, till within these very few years, in this particular country.

"If the matter rested here, I fear it would have been deemed a most extravagant assumption in any court of the law of nations to pronounce that this practice, the tolerated, the approved, the encouraged object of law, ever since man became subject to law, was prohibited by that law, and was legally criminal. But the matter does not rest here. Within these few years a considerable change of opinion has taken place, particularly in this country. Formal declarations have been made and laws enacted in reprobation of this practice, and pains, ably and zealously conducted, have been taken to induce other countries to follow the example; but at present with insufficient effect; for there are nations which adhere to the practice under all the encouragement which their own laws can give it. What is the doctrine of our courts of the law of nations relatively to them? Why, that their practice is to be respected; that their slaves, if taken, are to be restored to them; and if not taken under innocent mistake, to be restored with costs and damages. All this, surely, upon the ground that such conduct on the part of any State, is no departure from the law of nations: because, if it were, no such respect could be allowed to it, upon an exemption of its own making; for no nation can privilege itself to commit a crime against the law of nations by a mere municipal regulation of its own. And if our understanding and administration of the law of nations be, that every nation, independently of treaties, retains a legal right to carry on this traffic, and that the trade carried on under that authority is to be respected by all tribunals, foreign as well as domestic, it is not easy to find any consistent grounds on which to maintain that the traffic, according to our views of that law, is criminal." See *Dodson's Admiralty Reports*, vol. 2, pages 250, 251.

The leading principles in this case were recognized and confirmed in 1820, by the Court of King's Bench, in the case of *Madrazo vs. Willis*. Similar views of the law of nations were taken by Chief Justice Marshall, in the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of the *Spanish and Portuguese vessels captured by American cruisers*. It was not contrary to the law of nature, or else the God of nature could not have permitted its sanction in that code which he gave to his chosen people. It was not incompatible with the practice of pure and undefiled religion, because it was,

* 1 Peter, verses 18, 19, 20, and 21. The Epistle of Paul to Philemon, verses 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. Epistle of Paul to Titus, ii, 9, 10. 1 Timothy, vi, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Colossians, iii, 22, 23, 24. Ephesians, vi, 5, 6, 7, 8. St. Matthew, xviii, 23, 24, 25, 26.

at least, permitted by Him, who is the great and sole object of the highest religious homage. • Thus we see, sir, that by the law of nature, the law of God, and the law of nations, slavery was tolerated and justified; and the broad doctrine is laid down by Blackstone, that the law of nature recognized the right to property in all mankind equally; and the first title to individual property he founds on occupancy, and traces the continuance of that right to civil or municipal regulations; and if we examine the Bible, which, he says, is higher evidence of the law of nature than the opinions of ethical writers, we shall find that individual or private property in slaves as well as other things is recognized therein. Property in slaves is recognized by the Constitution and laws of the United States. As persons, they constitute an element in representation; as property, they are liable to taxation. They have been subjected to it whenever you have resorted to direct taxes, and often sold by the Government officers in making their collections. You yearly repeat this selling of slaves under executions founded upon judgments against defaulting officers. By your navigation laws you also recognize property in slaves. You provide for their transportation coastwise from the port of any State to any port or place within the limits of the United States.

Here, sir, you protect our right to slaves where they are carried by their owners beyond the limits of the slave States, and the Constitution requires you to deliver them up when they escape into such States as have abolished slavery; thus showing that the right to slaves is not destroyed the moment they pass out of the jurisdiction of the slave States. If this be true, sir, upon what grounds can it be said that the slave will be free the moment he touches the joint territory of all these States? It is your duty to make laws to protect the citizen in the enjoyment of all his rights in these territories; but does that give you the power to abolish the right to property? Certainly not. The Constitution prohibits your touching private property under any circumstances, unless for public use, and then only upon compensation,—showing clearly that the framers of the Constitution never intended you should have power, either directly or indirectly, to abolish the right to hold property of any kind; and still more to tie up your hands and prevent your assuming powers which they did not intend to give, they stipulated that all the powers not expressly granted, or incidental to an expressly granted power, were reserved to the States or the people. But, sir, for the sake of the argument, admit you had the power, would it be just to exercise it? Let me put a case: suppose the South were in a majority, and to pass a law that all manufactured articles should be forfeited the moment they landed in our territories, either to the public generally, or to any informer, would it not be considered, and justly too, as an intolerable oppression on the North? But we might say to you with as much *sans froid* as you say to us, We do not intend to interfere with your constitutional rights; you can go into these territories where you please, and stay as long as you please, only you must not take these articles with you; and you may do even that if you choose, but we will not allow you to keep them there as your private property. Our slaves, sir, are not only property, but they are

persons, and make a part of our families; and when you say that slaves shall not go into the territories, you exclude a portion of our families, or you destroy the domestic relation between master and slave; and no sensible man, North or South, East or West, will hesitate one moment to say, that you indirectly, but effectually, prohibit us from settling in these territories.

You tell us that slavery is a great evil. Why so, sir? Was it an evil to the slave to be brought from the barbarous cruelty of infanticide and cannibalism in his native wilds, to the mild treatment and personal security of a Christian land?—from heathen worship to Christianity? Is he injured by being better fed, better clothed, and less worked, than the laboring classes of other lands?

There are no mobs, and no paupers among them, and less crime than is believed to exist among the laboring poor of any other country. They have less care on their minds, and are more contented than any other people. They give themselves no thought for the morrow, knowing that their master will provide for their wants; indeed, the master is prompted to do so, not only from motives of humanity, but from self-interest. If the owner neglect to provide him with proper sustenance, or impose excessive labor upon him, he thereby becomes enfeebled. If he fail to clothe him comfortably, exposure brings on disease, which causes loss of time and the expense of medical attendance. The slave when sick is sure, from the same motives, to have the attentions of his owner or overseer, and when he becomes old is still provided for. Who, sir, pays the poor man's medical bills when he is sick, bears the loss of his time, or provides him the conveniences of life in old age? Are these the evils of negro slavery? It is objected that he cannot go where he pleases; and who can? The slave is restrained by his obligation to his master; and necessity of some sort—generally the want of money—restrains other men. And let it be borne in mind, that in the case of the negro, the hardship is not in the loss of freedom, as it would be with the white man, for he has always been a slave, both in this country and in the country whence he came.

It is said that families and friends are often forcibly separated by slavery, never to meet again; and does not necessity—that necessity which calls the white man, in the pursuit of gain, to remove to distant lands, cause as much sorrow among his and his wife's relatives and friends as in the other case? But it is said to be an injury to us. This, sir, is a direct insult. When did you take out a writ of lunacy against the South?—before what tribunal have you established our inability to manage our own affairs, and by what authority do you assume our guardianship? But it is not true, in point of fact, as the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. CLINGMAN] showed, upon a comparison of Virginia with New York. Let us take Massachusetts and Maryland, both having about the same amount of territory. According to the census of 1840, Maryland had a free population of 380,282; and in 1847, her property was assessed at \$202,272,650. Massachusetts in 1840, had a population of 737,699, and her property in 1848 was only \$300,000,000. In Maryland the average property of every free person was \$531; in Massachusetts \$406—being twenty-five per cent. in favor of Maryland. Take another example: in 1840, Ken-

ucky had a free population of 597,570, and in 1848 her property was assessed at \$272,847,696. Ohio in 1840, had a population of 1,519,457, and her property was assessed in 1848 at \$421,067,991. The average property in Kentucky is \$456, and in Ohio only \$211—more than fifty per cent. less than in Kentucky; and as the population of Ohio is still greater in proportion than that of Kentucky, her average property would be less at this time.

In 1840, there were built in Ohio, 970 houses of brick, and 2,764 of wood; in Kentucky, 485 of brick, and 1,757 of wood. Thus it will be seen that, considering the relative amount of population of these States, the advantage is decidedly in favor of the South, and which is still more strikingly shown by a reference to the relative consumption of meats and breadstuffs.

It is believed that if the foreign population, with its natural increase, be deducted, the increase of the southern white population will be found to be the greatest. There were four hundred and seventy persons in the penitentiaries of Ohio in 1840, and one hundred and thirty in those of Kentucky during the same year—Ohio having twenty-five per cent. more than Kentucky, according to population, and one-sixth of all in the Kentucky penitentiaries were born in free States.

The non-slaveholding States are very much troubled with paupers, while, in the slaveholding States, pauperism is almost unknown. Pauperism and crime are not exotics at the North and West, while we are almost free from both. In 1840, there was more crime in the city of New York, than in all the fifteen southern States.

The greater wealth and prosperity of the South is not denied by the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. CAMPBELL;] but he endeavors to avoid the conclusion that we are more comfortable and happy. He says, "in the Northwest, we believe that the 'cultivation of the intellect—the advancement of public morals—are the true sources of public happiness. Hence we build churches and school-houses,' &c.—and makes a great display of Ohio's colleges, academies, grammar and primary schools, and brings up my State in his comparison. It is true, sir, the census shows we have a little more than our proportion of those who can neither read nor write, compared with Ohio. This is easily accounted for when you reflect that Alabama is a new State—that her population came from other States, and that among the pioneers of all new countries, there is a goodly number of unlearned adventurers, but who are generally shrewd and energetic men. It is equally true that Ohio has a few more than her proportion of colleges, if the returns can be relied on; and this is to be accounted for from the fact, that our State is filled with citizens from other States, bringing with them their partialities for the States from which they came, which induces them to send their children back to be educated, or, at least, to finish their education. Hence, you find Alabama boys at the colleges of almost all of the older States. But does this prove that education is less attended to in Alabama than in Ohio? We find, by reference to the same census, that Alabama had one hundred and fourteen, and Ohio seventy-three academies and grammar schools. Alabama had at these academies and grammar schools, five thousand and eighteen students; while Ohio, with nearly five

times her population, had only four thousand three hundred and ten.

Where now stands the gentleman's boasted superiority over my State in intelligence, based on his educational statistics? The gentleman very ingeniously adds the primary schools to the others, and then, upon the aggregate, boasts of superior intelligence. I suppose the gentleman had read that Solomon said "much wisdom is much grief," and he therefore selected a very moderate scale—the A B C class—for his boasted superiority. But even here, I doubt the gentleman's right to boast over my State, when it is borne in mind that men of wealth frequently employ private teachers in their families, in order to educate their children at home, and that these private schools are not enumerated in the census.

But, sir, the gentleman's speech contradicted itself on this subject, for just before he asserted our inferiority, he had charged that the South, who are in the minority, had aggressed on the North, by filling all the offices of this Government, or nearly so, from its organization to the present time.

My colleague [Mr. Bowdon] called his attention to his other branch of public happiness: and how did he answer—by reference to the statistics? No, sir! they did not suit his purpose. But the gentleman drew on a fertile imagination, by supposing that we did not punish crime, or, at least, to the extent they did, thereby yielding the moral branch, and much the most important one to society, to the slaveholding States.

Again, sir, the Mormons resided in Ohio for a long time, and some of them still do, and by their community of goods and plurality of wives, occasioned great disturbance and frequent mobs. Indeed, I understand that they have not only male mobs in the Northwest, but I saw in one of the public papers, a short time since, that they had a large female mob there. I could not believe it until a highly respectable western gentleman assured me that it was true, and that they had had several within the last eighteen months.

Woman in the South is looked upon as Heaven's last, best gift to man, and we are unwilling that even the winds of heaven should visit her too roughly; but in the highly moral Northwest, we find her in mobs, with missiles in hand, assailing the other sex. Is this the gentleman's boasted morality? May God ever, as heretofore, keep us strangers to this sort of morality!

The gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. CAMPBELL,] says, "our fair countrywomen, yielding to the tender sympathies which always adorn their sex, 'when inquired of by a disconsolate passer-by of her own sex, who, perhaps, may carry in her arms an infant slightly tinged, may point out the 'nearest and best road to Canada. Is there any thing wrong in this? Point it out.'" And the gentleman seems to think that this course is morally and religiously right, for he sanctions it.

We find in the 16th chapter of Genesis, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th verses, that "when Sarai dealt hardly with" Hagar, her maid, "she fled; and the Angel of the Lord met her and said: 'Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?' And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress, Sarai. And the Angel of the Lord said unto her, return unto thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands." Here is a case similar to the

one stated by the gentleman; yet how different the command of the Angel of the Lord from the advice of the gentleman from Ohio!

I have heard it said that slavery gave too much political power to the slaveholding States. This is an objection to the Constitution. Your fathers thought that there was good reason for adopting this provision, because it was believed that the slaves would keep out nearly an equal number of the white population, and if not allowed representation, the South would be shorn of much political power. It was therefore agreed that three-fifths should be represented and taxed. Experience has proved that in consequence of slavery in the South, almost all of the foreign immigration has settled in the North and West, and swelled your voting population to a greater amount than the three-fifths rule gives the South, which shows that the North and West are not injured in a political point of view. The labor of the slave is not brought in competition with the free labor of the poor in the North and West, and why? Because you do not raise cotton, sugar, rice, tobacco, and turpentine, which are the products of slave labor. The more slave labor is increased, the more of these articles are raised, and consequently you buy them cheaper, and that cheapness enables you to make the greater profit. Your prosperity enables you to enlarge your business and employ more laborers, thereby lessening the number employed in other occupations. Take, for instance, agriculture, and in the proportion that you withdraw laborers from its pursuit, you lessen the amount of its products, and thereby give the agriculturist a better market; and just so with other occupations. Abolish slavery at the South, and the exportation of cotton ceases; the heat of our climate, with the insalubrity of our atmosphere on the lowlands, will ever keep the white man from cultivating them in cotton, and if the negro were free, he would not. Look at Hayti, where the free negro has relapsed into pristine barbarism, and the exports which were \$25,000,000 in 1789, have dwindled down to less than one-twentieth of that amount.* In Jamaica,

* McCulloch's Universal Gazetteer, title *Hayti*: "One of the first effects of the revolution which abolished the slavery of the blacks, was an enormous decrease in the amount of agricultural produce. From 1794, the year in which the slaves were declared free by the National Convention of France, to 1796, the value of the exported produce had sunk to 8,606,730 livres, being only about five per cent. of what it had been in 1789; and seven years afterward the country had become almost a desert, not only from the waste of civil war, but also from the indolence of the black population. The famous *Toussaint L'Ouverture* adopted coercive measures to restore agriculture; and it is, we believe, idle to suppose that any other will ever be effectual in such a country to impel the negro to labor."

"Moreau St. Mer, quoted by McCulloch, says the land is never manured, and scarcely ever weeded; and only a part of each year's produce is converted into molasses. This arises principally from idleness, to which may be added the depredations of cattle, owing to bad fences and the almost total impossibility of repairing sugar works, from a want of workmen and the bad faith of all parties concerned."

"The very little field-labor effected is generally performed by elderly people, principally by old Guinea negroes. No measures of the government can induce the young creoles to labor, or depart from their habitual licentiousness and vagrancy. The few young females that live on the plantations seldom assist in any labor whatever, but live in a constant state of idleness and debauchery."

McCulloch: "Morals are universally degraded. The private habits of the people are characterized chiefly by filth and laziness; marriage is scarcely thought of, and the ties consequent on it have not the shadow of an existence."

where the experiment of freeing the negro has been tried, it has failed. In the first ten years her exports have fallen off one-half; the negroes refuse to work even for high wages, beyond mere necessities; the planters are said to be bankrupt, the plantations abandoned and the island hastening to ruin. All experience has proved that the emancipation of the negro causes his labor to be lost to the world: do so at the South, and you destroy the culture of cotton,—do that, and your factories must fail, your commerce must languish; commercial distress will seize on your cities, and with rapid strides advance into the country: and let no northern or western man, whatever may be his occupation, or however humble he may be, suppose, for one moment, that he can escape this universal distress. If you destroy the culture of cotton, you injure every man, woman, and child, who wears clothing made of this indispensable product. If you greatly reduce the quantity raised, you still injure them in the degree by causing such goods to command a much higher price.

Again, sir; abolish slave labor, and you destroy the largest and best market you ever had. Your northern manufactures of every kind must find a market in distant lands; the hogs, horses, mules, &c., of the West, will likewise have to seek other purchasers, and the South will compete with you by becoming stock-raisers, mechanics, artisans, and merchants. Will you, in blindness to reason and your best interests, strike this blow? It may be said I am stating an extreme case; that you do not propose to interfere with slavery in the States. Others tell us they do; and when I find you marching in solid column with these men to restrict slavery where it is, I must be pardoned for classing you all together—especially when I see your plans are the best chosen to effect the object avowed by others. Why will you restrict slavery? You must know that extending it does not add one to the number of slaves. I have been told that if we enlarge the area of slavery, we increase the comforts and good living of the slave, and they consequently multiply more rapidly; and in this way slavery would be increased, and to this increase you are opposed. And if this be true, you are, on your own showing, in favor of the reverse of this proposition, which is—by bad living and starvation to prevent the increase; which idea is fully illustrated by a member from Pennsylvania, [Mr. STEVENS,] who said, "confine it, (slavery,) and like the cancer that is tending to the heart, it must be eradicated, or it will eat out the vitals." Yes, sir; gentlemen have spoken out—it is not for the good of the slave; it is not for the good of the owner; it is not for the good of the country; but it is for political power that you are struggling. I have been told that the South could unite on any great question—not so with the North and West—and it was necessary to keep up this, the only question which could bring all your forces together in the field. Thus, sir, fanaticism and political ambition combined, have brought this Government to the precipice, and are still urging it on, when, before you can be made to see and feel the danger, all may be ingulfed in one common ruin.

I this day tell the South, that if she supposes she has none to contend with but the Abolitionists proper, she is greatly mistaken; yes, I tell her not to slumber under the impression that she has nothing to fear from a handful of Abolitionists. I say to

her, "Awake! or the Philistines will be upon you!"

Gentlemen seem to think that we are afraid of our slaves, and look to the North and West for aid to keep them in subjection. A more ridiculous idea never entered the head of man; and it seems to be thought that a proclamation of freedom would bring them all to your aid against us. So thought Cains Marius, in his sixth consulate of Rome. When Sylla was advancing upon the city, Marius proclaimed freedom to all the slaves who would join him; and history—the chronicler of the past and apocalypse of the future—informs us that he obtained the enormous number of three! Such would be your disappointment, when you came to try it. Why, sir, does not the history of the two wars with Great Britain prove this idea to be a mere fallacy? If, in the days of Rome, where slavery existed in its worst form—extending even unto life and death—they would not fight for freedom, how can you expect them to do so under the mild treatment of our Christian land? You seem to think that the poor white man of our country would stir up the negro to resistance, and head him in his wild attempts at robbery and bloodshed. Why, sir, let me tell you, that the poor white man, although not interested in the value of this property, and would go with you to abolish it, if it were practicable and desirable, has too much good sense, and is too good a judge of negro character, to aid you in such mad schemes; and why? Because he knows that if the negro were freed and continued in the country, it would be giving up all he had to thefts and robberies; and although his feelings are not enlisted in favor of this kind of property, yet you would find him disputing every inch of ground with you—not in defence of negro property, but of his home and little ones.

The poor man will never consent to be degraded to either social or political equality with the emancipated slave; for he is as proud as you or I; and well knows that while his want of means would fix him to the soil, the rich man could go where he pleased. How, then, are our negroes to be incited to insurrection? Will you send emissaries among us? It will take an army to guard them. But, sir, suppose I am mistaken in all this, and rebellion should show itself—these people are unarmed; and, what is more, unaccustomed to the use of arms; and if it were necessary to put them down, we might be constrained to apply to them the same remedy used by New York, in the negro insurrection of that State in 1741 and 1742.

Why, sir, what have you done? By means of the press, the pulpit, the schools, and public meetings, these factionists have gone on in your midst, until they have poisoned the minds of your people against us. The press teems with libels against the South, the tendency of which is to put hatred into the hearts of those who should be brethren. A friend informs me that an infamous octavo volume has been published, and is in circulation at the North, containing a record of all the crimes, offences, and immoralities perpetrated at the South for the last forty years, and is presented as a true picture of southern character and society, while you surpass us both in the enormity and number of these offences, something like a hundred to one. What should we say to a similar collection of such crimes of the North and West, as a true representation of northern and

western character and society? Some of your people have sent publications among us, well calculated, and no doubt intended, to inflame the minds of the negro population to insurrection, and all the horrors that would follow in the destruction of that inferior race. Your children, I understand, have their tender feelings stirred up against us by exaggerated narrations and pictorial caricatures of the southern master and slave, exhibiting the brutal cruelty of the one and the helpless suffering of the other: thus, sir, you instill hatred into their young minds, to grow with their growth and strengthen with their strength, not knowing the bitter fruits they may gather in future times. Yes, sir; this thing has gone on unchecked in your midst, until the northern portion of those professing Christianity have refused to worship at the same altar with the southern slaveholder; and the northern professors, by trampling upon the rights of their southern brethren, have already divided one of the largest religious denominations in our land, and are now shaking all the others so violently that they can hold together but little longer; thus cutting asunder all the religious ties that bind them together as one brotherhood and one people.

Am I wrong in saying that public meetings are used against us, when your people, at such meetings, resolve "that this Government is a misnamed republic, a hypocrite and a liar; and warn the world against it as the deadliest enemy of human freedom?"—[Boston free soil resolutions in 1848]—and why? Because your Constitution recognizes slavery. The Constitution requires you to give up our fugitive slaves: how have you performed that duty? By forbidding your people by legislation to aid the owner in recovering his slave; by mobs to prevent him from getting his slave or to rescue him after he is taken. This is not all, sir. I am told it is now unsafe to follow a slave into your country—that a citizen of Maryland (J. Lytle) is confined in jail, in a neighboring State, under a charge of kidnapping, for endeavoring to get back a runaway slave; and, sir, it was but a short time since, that another citizen of Maryland, (Mr. Kennedy,) who sought to regain his slave by the aid of the law, was himself killed by a mob while going from the court-house, and the slave rescued. Not content with all this, sir, some of your people are sending agents (Mr. Barrett, in South Carolina) into our country with inflammatory documents to stir up the slave population to insurrection: yes, sir, they desire the slave to go forth in the darkness and silence of night, to fire our dwellings, and give our wives and children a prey to the flames, or massacre them in their flight. Is not this the internal fire of the earthquake which shakes this Union to its centre?

But we are told that abolition is weak, insignificant, contemptible, and ought to be despised; that it is the harmless ravings of a few fanatics. Is this so? No, sir. It is true that in its infancy it aspired no higher than to use the humble voice of "moral suasion." But it no sooner grew into consequence than it developed a mighty ambition, like the growth of rumor in the splendid imagery of Virgil—*ingrediturque solum*—it first creeps along the ground; but by degrees swelling into mighty and undefinable proportions—*Caput inter nubila condit*—it hides its head amid the clouds. It no longer contented itself with "moral suasion." It

grasped at power. It grasped at the sword—what is an appeal to legislation but an appeal to power—and what is the emblem of power but the sword, its ultimate means of enforcing its behests? It went into your State Legislatures and came into the Halls of Congress, demanding legislation. It came demanding the restriction of slavery in Missouri. It came demanding the liberation of the slave in the District of Columbia, and as an entering wedge, the prohibition of slave migration between the slave States. It has been partly foiled by the resistance of the South, but it has been too successful in excluding slavery from four-fifths of the Louisiana territory, which was before open to slaveholders. After this is it possible for any one to be so much deceived, as to look upon abolition as a weak and harmless thing? Has it not tainted the whole North and West with its fanaticism? Has it not compelled the two great political parties of the non-slaveholding States to bid against each other for its powerful support? Is this the harmless abolition once contented with “moral suasion?” No, sir—no. The gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. Ashmun] said: “And then, sir, as to the territories: I have already traced the history of events which have led the whole North to unite in a firm resolve to oppose the extension of slavery into them. That resolve will stand, and be enforced by our votes, whenever votes are necessary to carry it out.” And while by your legislation you invite immigration from every clime and country into these territories, the southern people are the only class in the world who are denied the privilege of settling therein; and why? Because we own slaves. For this reason we are to be degraded from equality with you, to the condition of inferiors. Is this not true? Does not the Constitution recognize the right to property in slaves? Will any sensible man deny this? How can it then be said we are equals, when you are permitted to go into these territories with all your property, of every description, while we are forbidden to carry the most valuable of ours? We are expected to bear the burdens, and fight the battles of the Government, but not to share in the spoils after the victory is won; and when you call this equality, think you the South will believe you, and calmly submit to this gross injustice? Even the worm that crawls on the ground will turn for resistance when trod upon; and do you expect less of us. We can find means enough within the pale of the Constitution to apply the cup of bitterness to your lips. Then fancy not, while you are heaping aggressions and insults

upon us, that you can escape a just retribution. No, sir, no! Let the southern people refuse to buy your goods, or freight your vessels—let them refuse to buy western produce, and you will soon learn that to be great, you must be just and generous. The Methodist people protested years before they were forced away from their northern brethren. We protested years before we took up arms against the mother country; the first meeting held by our fathers was “to consult together on the present [then] circumstances of the colonies, and the difficulties to which they must be reduced by the operation of the acts of Parliament, for levying duties and taxes on the colonies, and to consider of a general and united, dutiful, loyal, and humble representation,” &c. Who, sir, would have supposed, from so mild a beginning, eight years’ war was springing into existence? Yet so it happened. Few foresaw and warned the British Government of its danger. It is true, Colonel Barré, in 1765, said: “I this day told you so, that the same spirit which actuated that people at first, would continue with them still, but prudence forbids me to explain myself further.” But he was heeded not; and shall not the same spirit which is now awakened in the South continue with them, unless you redress their grievances? Are there no signs in the political horizon indicating danger to the country? Is the discontent of fourteen States not worthy your serious consideration? We have protested against your encroachments on our just and constitutional rights for fifteen years, and what do you now behold? Our people are resolving upon concert of action, which, if not arrested by your timely recognition of our rights, may lead to consequences you little dream of.

Will you follow this ignis fatuus into worse than Saronian bogs, where all may be swallowed up? And what benefit will it be to you or the world, when you have ruined your country? I, sir, and the people I represent, are devotedly attached to the constitutional government our fathers gave us; we demand no amendments, we only ask that it shall be administered in the liberal spirit in which it was framed. With it we are willing to live, and under its flag, if need be, to die; but we insist you shall be bound by the solemn obligations of the Constitution, and that you shall not, by an irresponsible majority, trample it under foot, by creating an inequality between us. We can never consent to be your inferiors—better, far better, to-morrow’s sun should never rise on the South, than it should light her to infamy and disgrace.

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